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22 July 1958

MEMORANDUM FOR: Secretary, Intelligence Advisory Committee

SUBJECT: Report of the Critical Communications Committee

REFERENCE: IAC-D-55/13 dated 7 July 1958, Subject: Annual Report to the NSC on the Status of the Foreign Intelligence Program

1. In accordance with Recommendation No. 1 of the President's Board of Consultants on Foreign Intelligence Activities dated 24 October 1957, the IAC directed certain actions for perfecting the means of transmitting Critical Intelligence, particularly that relating to prior warning of Soviet attack, to the highest authorities.

2. One of these actions was to establish an Ad Hoc Committee on Communications. This Committee began its deliberation on 27 January 1958 and addressed itself to three problems.

- a. The definition of Critical Intelligence.
- b. The requirements for different types of Critical Intelligence.
- c. Procedures for the reporting of Critical Intelligence.

3. The report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Communications was approved by the IAC on 29 April 1958. The major result was the approval of DCID 1/8 which defined Critical Intelligence and established requirements for the Critical Intelligence that should be reported within ten minutes and that which should be reported within an hour. At the same time the IAC established the Committee on Critical Communications as a permanent committee charged with the implementation and monitoring of the operations of the Critical Intelligence reporting system.

4. The Committee on Critical Communications has coordinated the development of a system for the reporting of Critical Intelligence using existing communications facilities. This system was put into effect at 0001Z on 21 July 1958.

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5. On the basis of very limited experience, we believe that the inauguration of the CRITIC system has resulted in substantial savings of time in the reporting and dissemination of Critical Intelligence. It is anticipated that further substantial savings of time will come about as electrical communications facilities and handling procedures are developed specifically to support the system.

W. A. TIDWELL  
Chairman

Critical Communications Committee

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